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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ: SADDAM'S CONDEMNATION, US MIDTERM  
ELECTIONS; SAO PAULO

Subject: Media reaction: Iraq: Saddam's condemnation, US midterm  
elections; Sao Paulo

11. "Bush, A Lame Duck"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo editorialized (11/7): "Americans will vote today in the midterm elections, which represent a kind of referendum on the current administration. Polls have suggested that the Republicans will be defeated.... The causes for President Bush's popular disapproval can be condensed in three words: Iraq, Katrina and Guantanamo.... The good economic situation and the fact that the authorities have prevented terrorist attacks in the US since September 11, 2001, were not sufficient to avoid an erosion of the Republican Party's image.... Even if Bush's party does not succeed in reverting the Democratic Party's advantage, the axis of the US domestic and foreign policies will tend to be maintained. Like the Republicans, the Democrats do not have an alternative to get out of the Iraqi quagmire.... The most remarkable effect of today's elections is expected to be Bush's transformation into a lame duck."

12. "Saddam's Condemnation"

An editorial in center-right Estado de S. Paulo (11/7) opined: "There can't be any doubt about the moral pertinence of the verdict of Baghdad's High Court condemning to death former dictator Saddam Hussein.... There is no sense in questioning the court's decision based on humanitarian reasoning, the same way that it would be aberrant to deplore the execution of Nazi leaders determined by the Nuremberg Court. Everything else in the episode of the invasion of Iraq is a political disaster.... The fact is that there is not a good way out for this other crisis, which is exclusively caused by the US. In the very unlikely hypothesis that the death sentence is commuted, at least the most fanatic followers of the former dictator will be seduced by the fantasy that sooner or later Saddam will return to reestablish a Sunni hegemony in an Iraq free from occupation.... Shiites and Kurds want Saddam executed for the same reason the Sunnis want him alive: to foster their political intents."

13. "Bush Used Saddam's Condemnation In Political Rallies"

Foreign policy writer Raul Juste Loes commented in liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (11/7): "President George W. Bush has used former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's condemnation in the final stage of the electoral campaign.... The verdict was announced 48 hours before the elections, a fact that

raised suspicions over the Iraqi court. Critics have suggested that the judges collaborated with the sponsors of the new order in Iraq by providing good news for the Republicans on the eve of the elections."

McMullen